

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

MARAH ELLIS RYAN

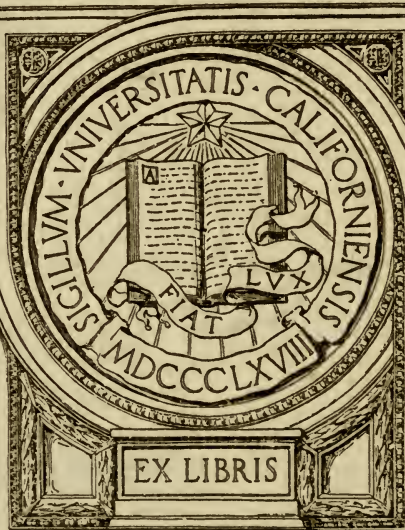
UC-NRLF



\$B 293 898

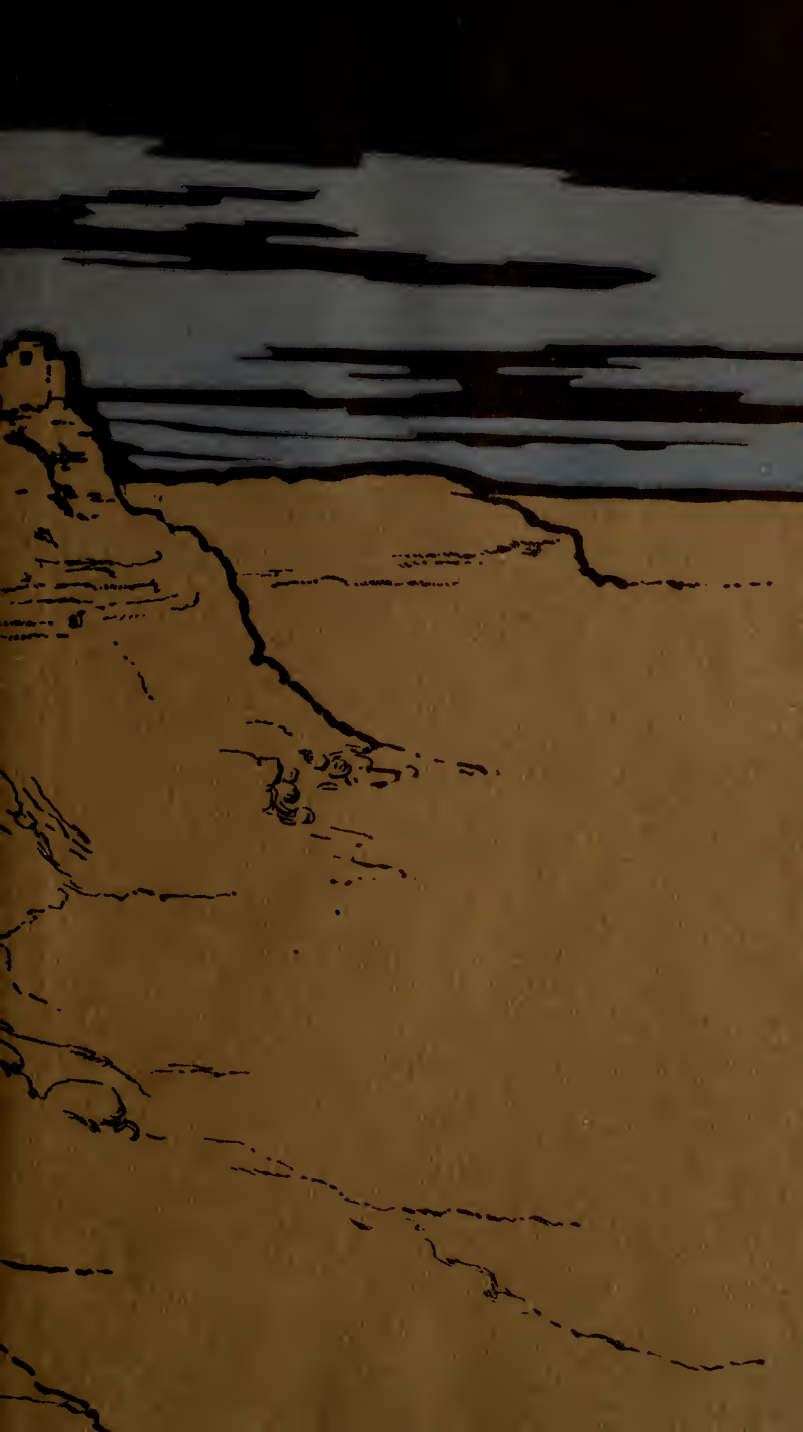


GIFT OF
Class of 1900



984

R 989



INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

By MRS. RYAN
FOR THE SOUL OF RAFAEL

With nineteen photographic
illustrations, and decorations
by Ralph Fletcher Seymour

Crown 8vo. Price, \$1.50.

A. C. McCLURG & CO.
Publishers



FROM PHOTOGRAPH COPYRIGHT 1905 EDWARD S. GURLEY

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

BY

MARAH ELLIS RYAN

Author of "For the Soul of Rafael,"
"Told in the Hills," Etc.



CHICAGO
A. C. McCLURG & CO.
1907

Copyright
A. C. McCLURG & CO.
1907

Published March 2, 1907

Decorated by
RALPH FLETCHER SEYMOUR

Class of 1900

TO THE
ALUMNUS

The Lakeside Press
R. R. DONNELLEY & SONS COMPANY
CHICAGO

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

273063



INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

In the Province of Tusayan, Arizona.
In the Moon of the Peach Blossom.

Lady of the New Moon :

I know that you will not forbid me the writing that name in a letter when your kindness allowed me, one sacred day, to write it in a poem, and the poem was married to the music by you, and was sung by you!

Now that you have made a bridge across the silence of the year, and have written me your question, I will answer.

It is quite true.

Your friends who came into the Province of Tusayan for the masked dances of the Hopi Springtime have

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

taken back to you the truth, colored, may be so, by the prejudices of their friends, the missionaries of your faith. But the main statement is a fact.

I can see the beautiful eyes of turquoise widen at the reading of this. I can hear the little sharp breath drawn, and can feel the little shock at the confession I send.

Yes! I am again the Indian! From the moccasin of brown deer skin to the headband of scarlet, there is not anything of the white man's garb to tell your friends that I was a player of the University team, who for a little while was called by a white man's meaningless name, and who sat beside you on the sand dunes of the Eastern Sea a year ago!

I sit alone now and write this on a sand dune under Arizona's skies, at the foot of old Wálpi's cliffs.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

I came here away from my old tower on the terrace and into the silence to write to you. The Hopi voices are very gentle, very caressing in their intonations, but to-day their music had no meaning for me.

In the sand dunes there is always silence ;— a suggestion of a vast desert of immeasurable silences where everything human can be buried and forgotten.

The white shells gathered by you and given to me in jest that day to make a necklace for an Indian maiden, are on a stone shrine centuries old on a wonderful mesa.

They keep company with the baho (plume prayer sticks) of our primitive religion. The God of the Skies guards them there.

This morning at sunrise I planted a baho of white feathers, and one of pine

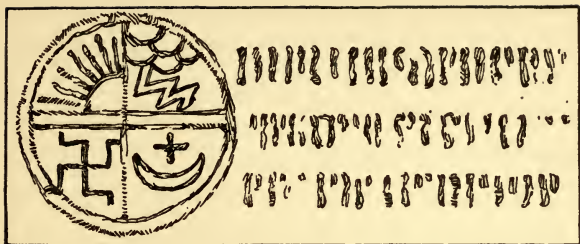
INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

needles opposite them. Pine grows in that place where your shells were gathered!

The Prayer-Thought in which they were planted? You, Lady of the Crescent Moon, and the corn-silk hair, would not have approved it; neither would you have approved the method by which it was offered to the gods of the Other Worlds.

I write this very plainly that you may know it is no mistake. The land of the races and the games, and the afternoon teas in the arbor, was of another life I lived. This is Sé-kyâl-êts-téwa (Dawn Light), the Indian, who writes, and who reveres your memory, and who lives again an Indian's life in one of the Indian cities of the desert. Lolomi!





In the Planting Time of the Corn.
Tusayan.

My Lady of the Silver Crescent:

Your kind words of my bits of verse,
—your reminder of what you hoped for
them—You!—has hurt more than any of
the other things of this past year, and
there have been many things to hurt.

The poems were the fancies of a
lonely Indian shepherd—the echoes of
the dreams of a boy! But the man can
not continue to dream. He has to wake
and see things in the sunlight, which is
merciless on the desert. A man may
flinch from the revelations of it, but he
can not escape it.

Your letter is a little cry of protest

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

against the relapsing of the savage,—an escaped convert.

But the protest, dear lady, has in it that little stereotyped note which the scientists and government specialists of the Indian field would, with a little sceptic smile, designate as belonging to their “poke bonnet” group. It lacks the personal note. It is the “cause” that is considered by that group; not the individual.

The individual it seldom knows. The sort of Indian it does know is too often the poseur with the dangerous small bit of education, and the sort of favors he accepts in the land of the white people, makes a man’s blood jump with anger to remember.

Yes, I will try to tell you how I learned that the Indian’s life is best for the Indian. The white man’s life is a life

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

unfulfilled for him. It promises everything but leaves him with empty hands.

I did not think so at first. In the light of your faith I saw things radiantly. I was to be their own apostle of your religion,—and yours was mine,—blindly and without question! From your white hand, the Indian writer of verses would have accepted nectar or poison with equal unconcern.

But I have had a year alone in which to think, and I have had to face facts.

Not anything of conventional religion called Christian has any real appeal to the Hopitû. It is too cold—too far away. The mythology of the Christian does not bring the gods so close as the mythology of the Indian, and all have the same foundation—created by the minds of men; influenced by the Divine universal Spirit of the Growing Things!

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

My people listen to the white man's missionaries because in some cases they are made to feel that the great power of Washington is back of them, and the Hopi is not without policy!

They go to the schools. They learn the English words and the white man's religious forms,—and straightway revert to their own gods!

In the last Flute Ceremony, one of the girls, who led the invocation to the God of the Rain, was a graduate of the nearest government school. She looked very beautiful in her draperies of purest white, jewels only of silver and coral, and the one white feather in her jetty hair—a Virgin Priestess of the Dark People—leading the long line of men to the shrine of the desert well as her foremothers had led the devotees from time immemorial.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

And the rain comes,—it has always come because of the prayers to the God there. It always will come, the old people feel assured, so long as the God of the Indian is not forgotten. And rain is the very God of Life to the desert !

Yesterday I talked with the old chief of Shu-pau-le-vi. He is chief of the village, head of his people—the Bear Clan, and chief priest of the Snake Order. He is a clever man. When I first came back to Hopiland I talked to the chiefs of all the villages. This one did not speak then. He said he would think and then he would talk. Yesterday he talked.

“It was in the moon of the Young Year when you, Sé-kyâl-êts-téwa, came back from the sea where the sun comes up from the Under-World. We listened while you talked of the missionary God. You read to us out of their book what

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

their God could do, and of what the people who had the love of their God in their hearts could do. It was much. I have waited to think, and I have looked each day on the missionaries' work, and the work of their mission God.

"It is a lie. And the truth is not in the hearts of the people who preach that God and scold our women in our own houses.

"Your book says what the White God did. The dead grew alive; the blind could see, and the sick were made well by Him. The book says that the true followers of the God can do all that, and can do more than that; and that the sick will be well by the touch of their hand and a true heart!

"The missionary can not make the sick well by the words from a true heart, but the Navajo singer can! I, with my

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

eyes, have seen that ! Why, then, should the Navajo listen to the missionary? The missionary does not believe in his own God, or he would do the work of that God as the God said he could do it if he had faith.

“Your book says if the followers of the White God have true hearts they can make friends with serpents, and no sting will come, and no poison.

“The missionaries who preach that God have not the faith in their hearts or they would lift the Brother Snake as we do from the sands in the warm Moon of the Green Corn !

“We keep him days and nights in the kiva, many of him close to us, with only good in our hearts, and he becomes as a babe who loves us. When the days have passed, we give to the Brother Snake our message for the gods, and we

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

take them to the four ways. We lift them to the Sun that the Sun may be glad, and that the Snake may be glad, and then we let them go, and they carry our message to the Under-World where the gods are, and the people who no longer walk in our Earth Life.

“They carry the message, and the gods know that our hearts were good, and that our faith was good, and our God listens and sends the rain as we ask.

“They come walking, the he-rain and the she-rain, across the desert, and together they come to the corn fields, and the peach orchard, and the wells under the mesa, and they make fruitful all the land.

“We are glad, and we know that the great God in the Sky is glad, and the gladness comes because we were not one little heart-beat afraid that our God would fail us!

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

“Has your white man’s God such true followers? Must we listen to the missionaries whose God fails when they touch the Brother Snake?

“Have the missionaries taught you, Sé-kyāl-êts-téwa, to do the things the White God said in the book they could do?

“No?

“When they teach you that, Sé-kyāl-êts-téwa, come here again to Shu-pau-le-vi and I will follow your White God, and my children will follow your White God!

“When we plant our plumes where the shrines are, our first prayer is for good thoughts,—then that our children may be wise and strong, and that the God of the Sky may be glad of us. I have listened to the mission talk many days, and nothing in the words of the missionary is more white than the Thought which we plant

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

with the prayer plumes on our shrines.

“I have talked.”

Then I spoke in the house of a wonderful potter of Te-hua. She is an artist and decorates and shapes great things in the clay. Not so great as some found in the buried cities, but the greatest made to-day by an Indian. Her children were lassoed a few years ago and their hair cut short by a mission field order. Their hair was their pride as the beard was the pride of the Hebrew priests. The humiliation of those families was very great.

Her son was there while we talked. He was one of the boys lassoed, and taken to the government school. He is back on the mesa, and is ugly to look at when the schools are mentioned. Six years of his life were wasted there. He comes back to his people, and knows that if he lives there, it must be as his father

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

lived—except that now he has more cultivated tastes to satisfy, and no further means or method of earning the price of them. To plant the corn, herd the sheep, hunt the rabbits, take care of his share of his own village—these are the life-work of Hopitú. The schools teach them to do that no better than their fathers did it before them. They are taught to read and write, and he asks “for what?”

The cities of the mesa have no books, and have never felt the need of them. Why should they read of the American life they live apart from? Suppose all your books, dear lady, dealt with an unknown land in the heart of Africa, would their contents seem vital to you?

These people are content without that other-world knowledge. The women grind the meal, the men weave and embroider their ceremonial garb and look

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

after the herds, and all are gentle, courteous, and happier than any people I have yet seen.

The pottery-maker is as bitter as her son over the wasted years when she needed him, and he was lassoed like a stray colt and taken to the white man's school. The daughter of her sister was also taken. The girl was pretty. She is not so pretty now, and she shed tears, and her mother beat her when she came back to the mesa ashamed. The Hopi mother guards closely her girls in her own home, but when the Great Powers combine to take the girl into a life that is all strange and new, and she is afraid, at every turn, of the dominating, masterful white,—how could the poor mother guard her girl there, or how could she understand the influences not known on the mesa, or feel sympathy when the girl came back ashamed?

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

It is so everywhere. The educated Indian is barred out from his own people by a smattering of book learning, which the chiefs see is to sooner or later divide them into Mission Indians and Pagan Indians. When that change sets in, the secret religious orders, with their mystic rights, are divided, and there is discord in the Clans. The children are told in the mission that their fathers in the Kiva (the Pagan sanctuary) are wicked men,—and so poison spreads! It results in mission Indians, called “Friendlies,” and the conservatives, called “Hostiles,” and in those two terms is all the foundation needed for internal strife, of which there is much!

I would help for harmony, but one missionary spoke to them of my wisdom, and my ability, and—from that day it could not be possible for me to be trusted

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

by the Conservatives—I was barred out—with smiles and all courtesy, but—I am barred out!

They will listen to the white teachers, because the government is back of them, but they know that I, Sé-kyāl-êts-téwa, the Indian of the Flute Order, has no government back of him! In five years, or ten years, I might live down their suspicion. Not before that, though I crucified myself for them;—that is decided in Tusayan!

So I am Sé-téwa, the worker in silver, as was my father, and his fathers, when the Castilians first camped under our city walls three centuries ago.

My people ruled then, and rule now. My uncle is chief of his Clan and his Order. He is afraid that he may die and I be chief in his place, but I do not wish it.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

The agent from Washington is the real chief. He decides. Rather than be a pretended chief, I would be glad to fight as our people fought the Apaches long ago until all were killed but the one let live to carry the word back to his tribe of how it was done! The Apache shield cut in the rock wall of the mesa, is in memory of that battle, and the score is cut opposite it to show the number that was killed, and—they were many.

But we are not fighters now. He who writes was first an Indian shepherd, who dreamed dreams and sang songs. Then for one little Breath of Heaven he was called by you "friend,"—and now he works at a forge in a tower over a gateway that was very ancient when the first Castilians came to the land.

The day is going. The herald is calling from the house-top the religious

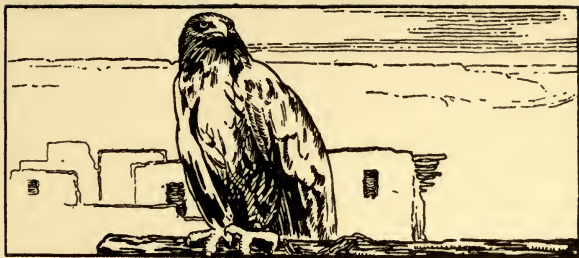
INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

ceremony in order for to-morrow. The Indian does not keep his religious ceremonies for the seventh day alone. They are part of every day he lives, and to even memorize all of them is scarcely possible for one man.

The herald looks very stately wrapped in his scarlet blanket, standing tall and straight against the gold of the sunset sky. It is always at the sunset and sunrise that he calls to the people.

At the sunrise when I see him thus I think of Omar's word-picture of the Persian Muezzin of whom you read me once ; — all other readings have been forgotten !





In the Moon of the Rose.
Tusayan.

Maid of the Moon Song:

Did I not make it clear? There is no place for the Indian in your world. There is no occupation for him except a sort of grind for which the aborigine can not be fitted in one generation of drilling.

Money? Yes! a man can make money there. But what can an Indian buy with it in the white man's land, that is worth the having? The Indian whose intelligence makes a place for him in the higher circles, is, even there, only a wild thing caged for a while ;—tamed, and

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

petted, and shown to one's friends as a novelty for an afternoon or evening !

Often he is entertained in ways not good for him. His college chums, and their friends, find much amusement in planning ways in which there is novelty. Sometimes the sisters and the cousins of the college chums add to the entertainment ;— but the college chums do not know that !

The daughters of the desert are not clever enough for that double life,—but with further teaching from the white people they will know in time. It is inevitable !

I, Sé-téwa, wish to die as an Indian before that time !

Revered little Maid, your life, enshrined and sainted as it is, sees and hears none of the disillusiones an Indian boy meets at every turn in the white crowds of the cities.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

He does not want to be stared at;—admired because he can play a good game, and pitied because he is of the great unclassed!

The sympathy which means understanding,—that is the thing he waits for, and looks in each face for, and all he meets is the interrogation as though a glance should ask, “What is it you seek, Brown Wanderer?”

I sought nothing. I was taken because my people did not know how to say “no” to “Washington.”

I carried with me the songs of the old men, and the memories of the desert, and dreams—dreams of the greatness I was to see!

I did not see it. I used to think of the eagles chained on the roofs of old Walpi for the sake of the feathers to be had from them for the Snake Ceremony.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

The eagle tugs at his chain, and thinks of his mates drifting on the upper currents of air high above desert, and mesa, and far pine forest of the Navajo.

I was like that, — a young eagle tugging at his chain!

Then all the world changed for me, and I heard your voice — voice of a night bird singing one of my Indian songs! You could not know it, but I wept that night for the first time after they had taken me from the mesa. I did not feel alone any more.

It was my Hoetska—my night bird's song you set to the music first:— And I could feel the whisper of the desert wind, and smell the sage, and see the stars above the mesa! — all in that music —all held together by your voice! For that—for the singing of it—you were the one woman,—but for the wedding of your

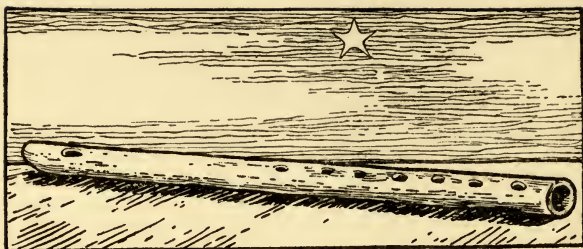
INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

music to my words—for that you were the very spirit of a boy's dream!

The boy was only a young savage, and his adoration amused your friends, but not you, dear lady of the Moon Song! You saw only a soul to be gained for your religion, and that was a very sweet and very serious matter to you, dear little lady revered!

The English words seem harsh when I use them to you! If you knew the Hopi, the inflections would tell you the difference. I always think of you in Hopi.





The Moon of the Shearing.
In an Indian Kiva at Tusayan.

Lady Hoetska :

That is the name of the little night bird of the desert whose song you sang !
When the dusk comes I think of you as Hoetska, and—listen for the call of the gray little bird in the cañon !

There has been trouble on the mesa, and I have been away, else your dear and kind letter would not have been left without answer.

The trouble with the missionaries and government at Oraibi has brought echoes of trouble here. I was interpreter, and when the result of the council was

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

bad, the chief, and after him the others, looked on me with suspicion. For a while I have been in the Navajo land. I have tried to see how it is with other tribes and their laws, and talk with other chiefs and agents. It is all empty words — the same everywhere !

The Navajos do not know their rights under the law any more than the Hopi, and the worst is, that it is not wise to tell them ! If they learn now how they have been treated through the past years against the laws, the trouble would only end in conflicts through which no one could secure benefit.

I visited other tribes last year — the Plains Indians. It is the same. One Reservation dares not send any but a white man as interpreter with Indian delegates to Washington. No Indian would be allowed by the agents to speak

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

for them, lest the government learn some truths. Their condition is pitiable.

My people, at least, are not like that. They have their corn fields and their grazing lands and their homes—as yet! But there is a constant fight to get them out of their houses,—their ancient fortresses! The white farmer lives near his corn fields, and the Hopi is told he must do the same unless he wants eventually to lose them to the white squatter when statehood comes. Many of the Hopi men ride miles each morning to their little plantations, do their work, and ride back at night to their wonderful mesa.

My uncle fears I will be chief. To show him I have no such wish I have left my tower over the portal. I write this in the stone walls of one of the many buried cities of our desert. This one is near the mesa, and only a portion of it

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

has been excavated by the seekers after ancient potteries and trinkets. ' Many pounds of turquoise were taken from this room, and woven fabrics, and curious sandals of the people whose names are lost. One chain of woman's hair was found there golden as your own, white maid of the East !

This room was later the Kiva of the priests of some order. It may have been my own—the Flute People. When the wind whistles in a storm across the sand dune, I like to think it is Lé-lang-ûh, the Flute leader, who sends his call down the ages to us for reminder of the Things of the Spirit. The Snake Order, which is the strongest, gives precedence always to the Flute Order, which they recognize and welcome as closer to the spiritual side of life ; in touch with the gods, and to them the Flute speaks !

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

Since your letters came I have written for you verses of these — my ancient people, and the land in which they lived. Some day I will bind them all together and send them to you. So kind a critic have you always been! Always—I write that as though it had been ages instead of a few weeks I was happy in looking on your face, and hearing your voice!

But there are moments like lightning flashes of insight—a searchlight turned on a soul! And in one such moment, when you let the Indian's eyes look into your own across a Manhattan dinner table—you may not even remember, so many eyes turned your way!—the Indian knew in that flash that his bonds were farther back than that look, and farther in the future than his eyes could see! That is, with the gods.

This I may never send you. So

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

many unwise things have gone on paper since you, in your pity, asked me to write. When they are very unwise—very Indian—they are not sent! So the little poems are not sent. They must be winnowed many times ere the tiny grains are fit for your eyes!

It is lonely here in the city of the dead. One great star, Venus, shines above the shrines on the mesa—we watched it together from the shore of the eastern sea a year ago.

It is the one visible link with that life. I can not go back to that life, but I watch for the star!





Season of the Nemon Katchina.
In the Kiva.

Lady of the New Moon :

Again has your letter waited !

I have not walked for more days than they will tell me. The old Indians say it is the curse brought by white people's schools — this cough and this weakness ! Maybe so. Many do come back with it, and maybe it belongs to the days when I went from tribe to tribe, and slept on the ground when the cold rains walked in the night.

But to-day I sit at the top of my ladder—the Kiva is always under ground; there must be but one entrance to the

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

sanctuary, and that must come from the way of the sky!

The world looks very beautiful across the plains. There is a well below the walls, where the herders bring their sheep, and goats, and burros, and there are many peach trees, and a great sand dune. Across it one lone track leads into the nothing of the distance, and breaks the ripples of the sand—they are as ripples on the water when the breeze comes.

Always, as one looks far to the south here, there is a suggestion of the sea coast,—the soft haze makes one feel that just beyond the buttes, and mesas, and the Sacred Mountains of the West, the water must be. The walls of the Walpi mesa—the narrow finger of stone hundreds of feet high jutting out into the plain,—speaks to one of giant breakers once beating the rock barriers into the sands.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

One dreams of the water here in this land, where hourly the women pass and re-pass on the narrow trails, carrying the great water bottles to the wells in the old city in the mesa. You are artist enough to appreciate the picture they make against the sand dunes, or the rock wall, or the sky !

The earthen bottles they carry are very heavy, and are borne on their backs in a scarf or shawl forming a band above the brows. It looks like cruel work, but the Hopi maid, who grinds meal daily on the primitive grinding stone, and sings at the same time the songs of the coming of the gods, and of the running water, and of the butterflies hovering above the desert bloom, is made very strong, and when she becomes a woman, no load seems heavy.

A strange thing has happened. You

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

ask me to tell you all of the life here, which seems no part of the America you have known, so I must tell you this.


When I was ill, some one unknown to me came to the old Kiva and took care of me. I thought it was the old Chief who relented, and had sent some one from the village—but it was not so. When no one saw me on the trail, or at the Sun Shrine of the mesa, they thought I was gone again to the Navajo land, and no one can tell who carried me the water, and brought me eggs and piki.

The Chief looks not pleased at it. He would like to make the people think that I am doing some sacrilege by living in the old Kiva, and that the bread and the water is of ghostly bringing. He would like them to think that I disdain the rules of the Orders,—even the unknown Orders of the Ancient Dead!

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

Once I wakened and heard a step, and some one running on the roof above. Once I saw a face—the startled face of a boy—looking at me from the top of the ladder, and on my pillow was fresh silk of the corn! Often I heard the soft tones of Te-hua when I was too dull and stupid to care whence they came, but the corn-silk seemed always on the pillow or on the stone floor. It was the color of your hair,—Talapsha-mána.

And even now that I can walk the same care comes. I do not walk far. My dwelling is on the knoll, and to walk far means to climb a steep place on my return—but in the little while I may be gone, some one brings to the Kiva simple things that a sick man might eat, and the wonder grows as to who it may be!

You ask the meaning of the sign  in my letters. It means different things

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

in different lands, and has been known in all of them. It is found in prehistoric carvings, and is claimed alike by the Oriental and the Indian medicine singer, or chanter of the healing songs of their faith.

The Persian meaning is pretty. It combines for them the Su, a sacred bird of their mythology, with the Astika, an eight-rayed star of most mystic significance.

I like best the Apache reading of the symbol. To him it is a sign for the Spirits of the Air who reveal the unseen in visions.

When one of their priests or medicine men,—for like the original apostles of your religion who were called upon to demonstrate by their work that they were entitled to preach of the God ;—like those men, the priests of the Indian tribes, must

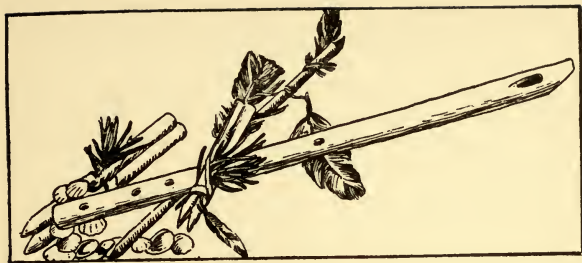
INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

be proven by their work, not by their talk: they are both priest and physician—when one of them wants to come nearer the gods, or bring the God Thought close, he carries a little tablet or amulet with this sign on it, and goes alone up into the Mountains, and chants his prayers over it for hours—perhaps for days—and waits for the coming of the spirits whom the gods send!

And I, a creature of visions—an Indian who lives most in his dreams these days,—I have no mountain to climb to bring the God Thought near, but I have a shrine on the mesa!

And there where the baho, and the pine needles, and the white shells are, the visions come very close sometimes: and in recognition of them, I use their symbol.





In the Vine Bloom.

Maid of the New Moon :

To-night the real Lady Luna whom we call Mú-ya-wuu is coming from our Under-World beyond the far mesa of Awatobi — tragic city of the Old Days — whom ancient Wálpi annihilated !

Not until one has slept in the desert with the sage brush for a pillow, does he know the witchery of desert nights.

Darkness, and the glimmer of stars !

Then, beyond the far highlands, the cool silver radiance grows and grows !

Miles of the lower plain where the corn fields are, still in the shadow. But

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

the near sage on the higher knolls is transformed,—and the white glory of it is sifted through the silver gray, odorous screen!

Clouds, fleecy white, drift across the high blue, and against it is silhouetted one moving figure—an Indian shepherd late in his home-coming from the corrals.

The silver light catches the crimson of his headband, and the white of the goat-skin he carries across his shoulder—then a turn in the trail hides him in the shadow of a little cañon! And again, there seems nothing living in all a beautiful but lonely world,—nothing nearer than the deathless smile of the stars—and the reflected light of the silver globe which scientists tell us is a long dead world!

I write “nothing nearer,” and on that instant the little call of Hoetska,

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

the night bird, came to me from the soft gray shadows of the cañon,—only once —one call !

But the one call brought the needed note of harmony to the night !

My white training tells me that the shepherd startled the night bird there by the trail, and that it did not know or care that I waited for its signal ; but my Indian dreams tell me other things, and the lonely world of a moment ago is no longer lonely !

You ask me of the Indian cities of the mesa, but they are scarcely describable in a letter. There are so many mesas with the old stone villages, jutting out into the plains, and numberless ruins of others whose names are now forgotten !

Ours has three villages. One comes up the great stone roadway past the Sun Shrine,—and the place of this shrine is

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

so beautiful that the Greeks would have built marble temples to their gods there! One goes up and up, with the great rock wall rising high on one hand, and another rock wall falling sheer on the other hand,—and the view of the plain below,—the long lines of corn fields of deepest green and the strip of yellow sand—and the paler green of the desert and the grazing ranges,—and the dark wall of the far mesa fencing it to the east,—words could tell you nothing of the beauty it holds!

And then from the view of the plain below, one turns to find himself suddenly at the end of the road and in the very village. That is Te-hua—and Te-hua is the keeper of the Gate Way. The Te-hua people belong to a different lingual group, but ages ago they migrated from the Rio Grande and sought to live with the powerful Wálpis. Our people said, “Yes, you

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

are welcome ; there is room, but you build your village where the pass is, and you guard the Gate Way against the Apache and the Navajo — thus may you live here.” So they did, and they put the shrine at the Gate Way to help them guard it, and so it has been ever since !

The houses are of stone—terraced,—and there is always an inner court where most of the religious ceremonies are held, and always the shrine in the centre !

From Te-hua it is only a little space to Si-chom-o-vi, a newer, better built village, but less picturesque. And then beyond that—along a narrow trail worn deep in the rock through the ages,—then one faces Wálpi ; a great pile of old stone walls and terraces, and portals, and stone steps to the roofs, on which half the life is lived !

It looks like pictures of old castles

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

of the middle ages. She has been mistress of these plains for centuries—has Wálpi. She has lived long and seen tribes live and die,—and, in her uncounted years, seen loves live and die—if Love, the Real, ever does die!

The Indian can not think that it does. Perhaps somewhere in that Under-World of the gods, it is born again,—where there is no death—and where there are no veils drawn between our lives!

In the Snake Ceremony of which I wrote you, the snake priests always send a message before the altar to those of the Under-World, who are understood as being always very near, and who must never be forgotten; there must be no veil between! The snakes would not like it,—and the gods of the Under-World would not like it!

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

You see, we are very primitive—very close to the few real things within our world's knowledge! The Hopi knows he will be punished in the Under-World if he does evil here, but it is as a father or older brother would punish a child to teach it wisdom! There is no Hell such as the Christians believe in,—and no personal Devil who revels in tortures.

I can not reply to the sweet things you wrote me of your own faith—I can only say it is not for the Indian! If I told you of the reasons why, it might hurt you.

Those thoughts of yours are inherited, as are the thoughts of my Hopis. You did not find them. They were no personal revelation to you; they are with you by calm acceptance of the approval of many good and admirable persons whose opinion you would not presume to question.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

But if you will take the very heart germ of that inner belief of yours,—strip it of all the ceremony you have it dressed with,—take it apart from the tabernacle made by hands of men,—take it into the open,—carry it with you to a flower in the meadow, a rock in the desert, a pine or palm in the forest—any expression of the Living Spirit of the Growing Things,—or even shut yourself alone with it in the Silent Places,—you will find, according to the spirit that is in you, how much and how little, the conventional form counts for in the meeting with the God in you!

Each life must find its own revelation of Religion, as each life must find its own revelation of Love.

Some lives never do find either.

They live a sort of twilight existence, and those who live in the twilight know nothing of the power of the Sun!

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

They shrink from it; they mask themselves from its glory; they light, instead, their little candles of conventional religious form — moulded by some one else! They light other little candles that the glimmer may outline their careful, well-ordered affections.

They read in books of what Religion should be, and of what Love should be, — another man's theories of Love! — and by that they think it is duty to live, and they live by that!

The Indian has no Book of Love, but the Book of Nature. It needs no glimmer of candle for the reading.

The Flame Divine, when it does come, brings with it the light of individual revelation. This is true also of all vital religion.

The Apache who goes alone to the heights, and concentrates his very Being

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

on the thought of visions from the Powers of the Air, comes very close to the line of thought followed by the accepted prophets of your own faith.

But the Indian has had no written language to record his Mountain Visions or prophecies !

This religion of the Indian could not appeal to you — all your training and inheritance are against it. But neither does the religion of your missionaries appeal to my people — it demoralizes them by making them pretend, out of policy to government and missionary, to believe that which they do not believe ! And that is the real infidelity to one's own soul !

The Hopi is facile, adaptable, and imitative,—on the surface. But when they die, they die fearless Pagans, and go to walk in the orchards or corn-fields

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

of the Under-World, where the sun, and the stars, and the moon go after they pass the edge of the western horizon.

The Hopi knows that the corn-fields of the Under-World must have the sun one-half each day, and that the stars and the moon follow !

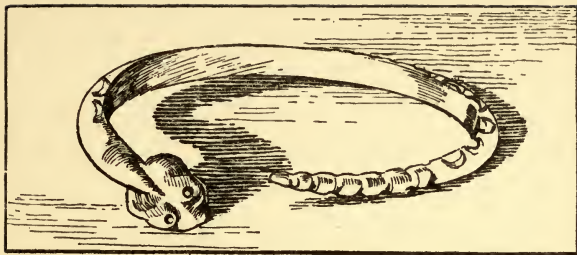
The missionary may talk to them of Trinities, and a Heaven in the Sky, and a God who died for them,—but the kind of God the Hopi wants, is a God who answers prayers to the music of the Flute, and who makes the corn grow !

You think that very material? Yet the prayer of the Hopi is not so ; it is first of all for good and beautiful thoughts—or to meet the Thought of the gods ! The prayers even for material things are at least not selfish, for they are for the general good. Only a sorcerer would pray to the gods with an evil wish in his heart !

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

New Moon Lady, I do not like to write the things which seem to argue with you. I only have to show you that my life will not be long enough to change one iota of this inherited religion,—and I see no better one I could direct them to—none that is better for the Indian.





In the Kiva.

Dear Lady of the New Moon :

I have found my nurse of the sick days ! You ask about the girls and the women here. I will try to tell you of this one. It is very strange.

I started from the Kiva and had forgotten a staff I have walked with since the weakness and the cough came. I turned back, and then I saw some one going down the ladder. I stood quite still by the corner of the old wall, and then, after a little, there came quickly up from the Kiva a girl who looked behind her in fear, and who carried an empty water jar,

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

and who almost fell when I stopped before her and put out my hand.

She trembled so that I took the water jar lest it should fall and break—and then the tears came in her eyes and I saw that she was afraid. I took her hand and sat down on the old wall, and tried to have her sit there, but she slipped from my grasp and sat on the ground, a little ways off. She was pretty.

“So it was you,” I said, and she bowed her head, and the dark red came in her face, and then she grew almost white. It means much for a Hopi girl to go to a house where a man is alone. It is against their traditions, and she knew—I knew!

“It was I, and Basa, my little brother,” she said at last.

Then I remembered the boy’s face I had seen, and after many questions she told me all.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

She was a shepherd girl tending the herds because her brothers were too small to go alone. Their father was no longer on earth. They had two burros and they lived near the gate of Te-hua.

When they brought the sheep to the spring they had heard my moans under the ground. Other shepherds had heard them and run away. Ghosts were said to trouble that old ruin.

But she had seen me sleeping one day by the wall of the Kiva, and had remembered, and she held fast the hand of her brother and would not let him run away, and they followed the voice till they found me—and that was all!

She feared the Chief would forbid her coming to the Kiva, so she had threatened her brother if he told it.

She had heard that Wálpi was angry with me.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

“And were you not afraid to anger Wálpi?” I asked, and smiled at her—but she did not smile; she looked very troubled, and bowed her head again.

“Wálpi, when angry, can be terrible,” she said, and pointed to the line after line of stone wall and stone foundations around us—the markings of a larger city than now stands in the desert. “This was Si-kyat-ki, a proud place, and rich in the other days. Then Wálpi grew angry, and men came down from the cliffs one awful day, and killed all but the girls they carried back with them. It is not well to anger Wálpi!”

She spoke with a certain foreboding—and she certainly wanted to be kind.

“What is your name, little maid of Te-hua,” and the incongruous one she spoke will make you smile—“Geraldine.”

“I mean your own name,—the one

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

before the missionary saw you—the name Te-hua gave you.”

She lifted a handful of sand and let it fall slowly on the stones beside her.

“I am this,” she said, “Tú-wa-ni-ne-ma, the sand of the desert !”

I asked her if she had always been a shepherdess, and at that she broke down, and wept, and said “No.” She had been taken to the government school and made to learn the books and the writing—and her mother had died while she was gone—and her father had died before that—and they had only the sheep and the two burros—and there were two little brothers.

If she had not wasted the time in the schools she might have learned to shape the pottery and draw on it the symbols of an old faith with the brush of the yucca fibre,—and some day she might have

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

made it fine as the work of Nam-payo, but all the years were lost in the schools —and now she would be old before her brothers were able alone to keep the sheep and plant the corn! She looks seventeen!

And that, dear lady, is the little tragedy of one Indian girl whom the schools have unfitted for the one art she craved. She has tried to smother the craving, but it has made her bitter. She is more aggressively Indian than if she had never read a written page!

I had brought from the Navajo land a silver serpent bracelet of a very ancient design. When she forgot to be gentle Te-hua and held up her head, and spoke of the schools, and the lives wasted in the white men's way of life, she looked as if the serpent bracelet would fit well on her arm!

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

I asked her to wait and I brought it to her.

“Wear this for me, little sister,” I said, “and remember when you look at it that I stand ready to help you — and to help your brothers.”

She stood up and let me fasten it on her arm. She did not smile at the gift as Hopi maidens do.

“I shall remember that when you are Chief, O Sé-kyál-êts-téwa! And it will be on my arm when they cover me with the sand under the mesa.” Then she walked away.

Her every intonation, her carriage, and her thoughts, are so Indian that she is a delight.

Many of the girls newly from the schools retain the feeling that they should strive to be like white people. She is the aggressive opposite.

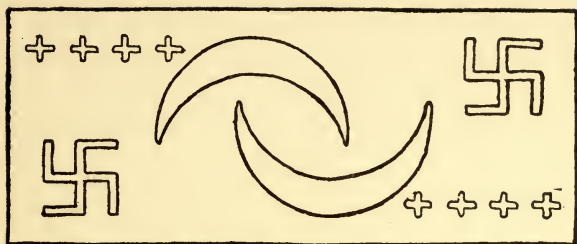
INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

The long lines of rain have been walking over the land while I write to-day. And after the rain we have sunsets here so wonderful that one wishes not to lose one little portion of them. Because of them I miss my mesa heights; yet it will be worth climbing for when I am again able.

I meant to go this day, but the day is nearly done.

I close my eyes and see the glory of the rose light touch the white shells on the shrine; but only my thoughts go—I can not follow.





The Kiva.
The Bloom Time of the Desert Things.

Maid of the Far Land :

You may be right. But what use to see now that I might have been happier without the White Man's books? To see it now is years too late—wasted years,—and only one memory of sweetness is mine as compensation !

Yes, I was not only content. I thought my lot full of happiness.

Wálpí to me was queen of the world, and even yet there has never been anything to me more beautiful than her old walls looming against the sky as one sees them from the sand dune.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

The dawn and the dusk here, as seen from the mesa, are revelations of beauty—new each day!

It is a joy for me to remember that even as a boy, I felt the glory of it all. I could not have told it in words—even music can not express it for me! But that boyish recognition of it helps me to understand my people now.

They do not say to each other, "It is beautiful," but they would fight until all perished if an attempt was made to remove them to the lands of their corn-fields.

The missionaries do not understand that love of beauty in the Indian's heart. Neither does "Washington." If they did they would not put the ugly, square, iron-roofed dwellings here in this wonderful desert setting—they are hideously incongruous! The Indian has always selected the best form and material for building in this land. His art instinct along these

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

lines is perfect—no white builder in three centuries has improved upon it!

The little shepherdess does come with her brother at times. I told her the message you sent—and your offer. She was silent—thinking a long time. Then she said “No.”

Before she went away she asked me what you looked like—the lady who wanted to be kind!

I learned then how hard it would seem to picture you to one who had not seen you—one can not tell in words the light in the eyes or the charm in the smile.

I could only tell her how fair you seemed, and that the corn-silk hair was like that of a little child, and then she said, “Talapsha—Talapsha!” which is the word for corn-silk—and walked away.

After she was gone I remembered that corn-silk on my pillow when I came

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

out of the sickness! She is a strange girl. Her work is the work of a boy and it makes her different from the gentle Hopi maidens.

She did not thank you for the kindness you offered, but I thank you—for it was an offer to my friend, and the thought is dear to me.

When in Navajo land I found one little piece of the very old, delicate, rose coral, of which little is left in Indian possession. Coral like that came here with the first Castilians—they brought it as special gifts to the Indian Emperors of the Quivira whom they thought to find in the desert.

I have cut it into little crescents and set them in a ring of silver; silver is called the “metal of the Moon” by the Indian, and is more beloved by them than the yellow metal valued by the white brother—and sister!

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

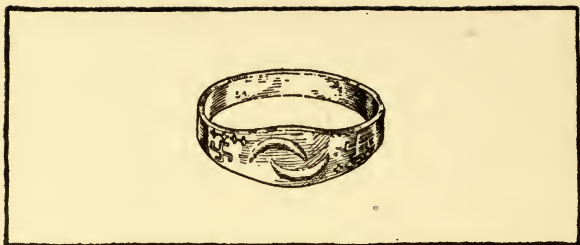
Because of the sacredness of it I send it to you, with the hope that some day,—on a seashore day, maybe!—you will let it rest on one of your beautiful hands!

You will not object to the symbol set beside the coral crescents? The maker of the ring knows,—O Talapsha Lady!—that you are as far from him as the coral in the depths of the sea, or the moon in the sky!

And he sets in the ring the sign of the Spirits of the Air to show you how well he knows it; and when the little silver circle goes to you it will live in his mind only as part of a Dream.

Hoetska, the gray little night bird of the desert, and the Indian in an ancient Kiva, alone know what the Dream was!





Lady Revered :

Did it call for reproof—the little ring whose value in coin would scarce have purchased one of the handkerchiefs of filmy weaving which you were always losing, and an Indian exile always found and brought back to you?

And you feel it your duty to tell me, O wise Talapsha maid! that there is a man—that it is my college chum—that he might not understand, and that—in another year you two——!

In a year from now I may not be able to send you a wedding gift.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

Keep the little Indian ring for that day—or, if the thought in it offends you, give it to the sea, where the sand dunes and the pines are !

If I were dead a thousand years I know it would hurt me if another hand touched it !





In the New Moon of the Corn.

Lady Beloved :

I write it thus because the written words will never meet your eyes :— no written word of mine shall ever startle you again, or ever offend you again !

By that decision, I have—in some strange way — torn down the barrier that was between us !

I dare let my thoughts go to you as I did not dare those other days when I waited for your letters, and needed to remember that the replies must not be too Indian else I prove perhaps my own doomsman.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

That is what I have now done. The gods have punished me!

But, Talapsha maid! you could not guess the thing you did, when, in your sweet kindness, you bridged over for a man the silence of a starved, empty year! The letters to you have become the strongest hold I have on life, and I can not give them up!

The things of beauty in the nights and days of the desert land, I have grown to see for two; and the joy of seeing it for you is far beyond two-fold—beyond the telling!

So long as I live at all, I must keep with me the feeling that I am still seeing it for you—that I am recording it for you!

The poems will tell you perhaps what it has meant to me;—for the poems sing themselves in the heart.

Only words of music could suggest

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

to you what your music revealed to me within myself.

And—O Maid of the New Moon—only you and I, out of all the world, will know the meaning of the poems, and of how they grew in the heart of an Indian dreamer!

No one will know who the corn-silk maid is, or who the Lady of the New Moon is, and there will be all those dear, secret poem days and nights between us—and the dawns, and the dusks, and the starlight on the mesa where the stone stairs lead up from the shrine!

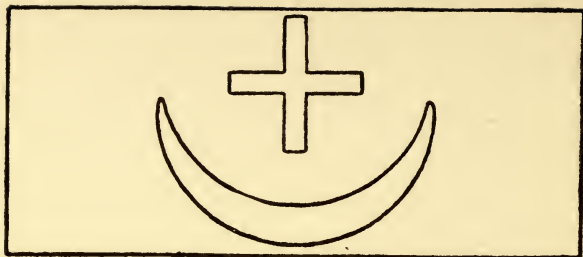
After the stars come out, the women no longer go up those stairs to the pool in the rocks to fill their water jars, and a great silence is everywhere over that high level. And there is a sense of being apart from and above the world of people, and at times, even above one's own self.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

It is one of the many places sacred to thoughts of you !

We will go there together now —you and I —very quietly —side by side ; and the dear nearness of you will bring the joy where words are not needed—not even a touch of hands ;—touch might drive the Dream away !





The Kiva.
In the Love Moon of the Dream.

Dream Lady of Mine :

Yesterday I rode in the early day to Shu-pau-lo-vi. After the talk with the Chief I went up a little hill at the end of the mesa where the forgotten dead city of Teh-bel-Haf-Kaquia is, and waited there to see the sunset on Wálpi, seven miles across the plain.

Misty purple it was on far mesas, and the wonderful stretch of the desert bronze was touched by a glory of rose !

Shadows of the mesas lengthened across the level — walked !

Over all was a sea-shell sky, and

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

westward, back of the rock-built, cliff-perched Shu-pau-lo-vi, scattered clouds poised like a flock of gray eagles, whose wide-spread, shadowy wings were edged with red gold !

Then, quick, a cloak of gray and purple draped over all the reflected rose of the mesa, and the world of color was dead, and from the summit of the dead city the star—our star—was seen in the turquoise over the great cliff to the west.

All the glory of it—all but the clear silver gleam of that star—had faded, and far across the level was seen the cold shadows of night, in which one could sense the coming of winter.

Then, after all hope of warmth was gone, there came, like a final benediction in color, a clear flush of pink over the turquoise, and the star was suddenly gold instead of silver, and the harmony

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

of it all made one hold his breath and instinctively reach out a hand for the far — perhaps never known — soul, who could share it all with the same feeling!

That last line seems like heresy, O Dream Lady! For the Indian Spirits of the Air who listen have brought you so close to me that all my heart-beats are of gratitude—the nearness of you is so sweet it is almost a pain!

But there are tragic moments when I try to call you to me and you do not answer! I know you will come close again; that you must be here in a little, little while, O Hoetska! and whisper the music of our songs to me!

But that wild, momentary dread of losing you, does come—and where you are, in even that one lost moment, I dare not think!

But you were with me on that ride

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

from Shu-pau-lo-vi. So closely were you with me that I write it down for myself, and if the lost moments do come again, I can look at the written page, and that wonderful night will come back !

And while I recall the sweetness of it—O Maid of the Corn-Silk hair!—you will slip again into your place beside me on the old wall of the Kiva.

It was a night of all sweet suggestion. The moon was young—grown only enough to cast our shadows, side by side, on the sage brush and the sand ! The fragrance of the night-growing things came to us and were breathed together, and, silently joyous, we rode through the fields of the corn like two Navajo raiders under the moon !

My horse grew impatient at the many times I halted him to look at the wonderful star as it sank nearer Shu-pau-

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

lo-vi terraces,—but I knew you wanted to look again and again at the beauty of it!

As we began the ascent of the rising ground at the Wálpi side of the river, the star seemed held so long a time on the very edge of the roof that one could not but remember the wandering Te-hua God, Poseyamo, who went, ages ago, to some southland, and who is surely to come again, and for whom signal fires have burned through the centuries to light him back to this land of the faithful.

The blaze of the star on Shu-pau-lo-vi's wall held beauty enough to call all the gods back—if they had seen it!

The beauty of it touched my heart so that it ached! Once I almost asked you to ride close—closer; to let me draw the dear head of the corn-silk hair for once so near that the sweet pain—so keen! so keen!—became as a knife to

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

cut through this wall of the flesh and set free the spirit to merge itself even more absolutely with your own !

For I know, O Moon Maid of mine ! that if, for once, your dear head lay folded close, and willingly, on my breast, or the lips of you—the dear, living lips!—touched me, I should die of that happiness !

And I am dying !

I have at last written it !

Hoetska, our gray little night bird, will soon sing alone here in the dusks—and there will be no one to record her call for you. You will hear it only through the verses I send you—they can be the wedding gift !

I have not written this before. I have not whispered it even to myself. But I must have known it for a long time. On many trails I have been seeing the

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

beauty of the Earth-Life with the look of good-bye.

In the Navajo forests it was the most pain to think good-bye.

I slept there with the fragrance of the pines about me; and, O Talapsha Maid! it was well the barriers of thought were still between us! The wind through the trees there sounded like the whisper and sighs of our Eastern Sea, and the old life came close — so close!

In the waking hours one can keep a Lady of the New Moon on a shrine and kneel there; but in the hours of sleep, the dreams come,—the dreams!

And as one says good-bye along the trails—and good-bye to each sunset of the Earth-Sky,—there is rebellion in the blood at times!

The keen desire for life—the warm and embracing clasp of human life—is so strong! We cling to it—to the thought

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

of it—as we keep our eyes on the shadowy pillar looming ahead of us on the trail, and on it is written, “Thus Far Does Human Life Walk With You—Not Beyond!”

Human Life has walked with me many days longer because of your letters of the Springtime and the Summertime—and I read now, why! It has been that I might live for this Moon of the Corn, and that the barriers should fall, and that I could draw you in my dreams, close to me—to go with me for the good-byes on the Earth-Trails!

When the New Moon came this time—in a sky of rose, O Talapsha! and our star beside it in its tender beauty!—I know it was our Love Moon (Hal-ye Mu-yo-wuu)—our first and last one! and—it is Lolomi!





The Hogan of the Peach Tree.
In the Love Moon.

Talapsha-mána :

A bird call in the dawn—and then
the flecked glory of red gold lying low in
the east !

Against it stands the solid blue of
the far mesa—dark and formless yet in
the new day,—only near one do the
clumps of blooming things, and the sage
brush, and the sand dunes catch the
light,—all golden !

My gray mesa of the Sun Shrine is
touched into rose by the kiss of the
awakened God of the new day !

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

The sunsets are so beautiful that they hurt,—but the sunrise I watch for always! It is so good to see it come each time out of the darkness.

When one knows that the Big Darkness is coming soon, he grows like a little child in the hours of the long nights—and the dawn is a glory of promise!

This is the first writing of the Hogan of the Peach Tree, but never have you been out of my heart—not one little minute! Two days ago, when the earth groaned, and struggled, and the walls of the Kiva lifted and sank again, and the great rocks split open along the foot of the mesa, the thought of you was the closest thing in all of Life!

I did not feel that I was saying good-bye to you. I had the exalted feeling that the Goddess of the Death Sleep had come to free me that I might walk unseen

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

by you always—and the thought was sweet beyond words!

The God of the Sky knows that if I had put the one prayer of my heart into words, it would be for that. Did He send me that thought when the trembling of the earth came, that I might have happiness with me to the End of the Trail?

The thought—and the vision of promise in the thought—brings a joy too tremulous for words; my heart shakes, for that might mean—always!

Tú-wa-ni-ne-ma comes and looks dark and sad on this Hogan of the Peach Tree at the edge of the sand dune. She is here to-day and she is very good. I wish sometimes she would not sit like that, and look—look at the pen and paper when I write.

But she can not know that there is beside me the unseen and beloved Maid

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

of the New Moon whom my longings hold close !

And she can not know that my heart is a shrine in which there is silence, and one Dream in sanctuary there !

Even the voice of the people jars on me these days when they all want to talk to me of the earth quaking—for I was nearer to it than any other ! I know many of them come filled with the thoughts of the Chief ; and he is certain that it was the God of the Under-World who shook the earth to drive me from the dead city where the Spirits of the Sorcerers have walked undisturbed through the ages !

My new Hogan—but to you, O Dream Beloved!—that thought sounds nothing to you. I want you so close here in the open that I can spell out everything to you—it does bring you nearer !

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

Hogan is Navajo for dwelling. We live such a little ways from those handsome Indian raiders—their tribe and mine have always had enmity over the corn-fields and the herds,—and we borrow many words from each other !

Walls are not always needed for a Hogan—nor a roof ! It means the place where one lives, though it be only a sleeping place for the night. One sees a circle of sage brush in the open desert,—a tiny circle covered by a blanket, and under it some brown wanderer sleeps. That is his Hogan. In your language you say, “Home is Where the Heart Is,” but my heart dares not go to its home—not yet !

It can only reach out, and bring here to this new home, the Dream in which the heart is centred.

From the shade of my peach tree I can lie on the blanket and look up to

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

Hua-lo, the great break in the rock where the Sun Shrine is.

The little forge is here beside me, but I have tried twice to work and it is not easy.

I meant to make an armlet to match the ring—if it went to you with the poems, and I were no longer alive, it surely would not hurt you!

How one clings to life! To give up the work, and put the tools away, is to say that life is done with; so, with the thought of you—of how beautiful I would make it for you—I try to lift myself out of the weakness.

A leaf falls on my hand as I write—it is as if you touched me! You are very close on that side of the blanket where the hand was! I rest sometimes and close my eyes—and reach out my hand, and where it lies on the sand I can

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

feel your own under it—slender, and cool, and white!

When I was stronger I did not dare let myself dream of touching you—but now ——

You come closer here than in the Kiva! O Talapsha Maid! not dearer—but as if not so much afraid!

Those old walls frightened others! I wonder now if the thousand years of Indian thought in those shadows helped to make a barrier? I never could feel you descend into the shadows of the Kiva with me. When I was ill I remember once I awakened myself calling for you!

But in the open, there was no barrier even there! When I came outside and sat under the stars at night, you would slip silently down beside me on the old wall.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

O Dream Maid! I am happy to be here in sight of the Shrine.

I did not know it meant so much until they carried me down where I asked to come, and when they had done so, and laid me in the shadow here, I looked up at the mesa and then covered my face with the blanket.

They thought I slept, but I only feared they would see the tears in the eyes of your Indian!

It was in the Moon of the Peach Tree Bloom that you wrote me first—O Lady Mine, of the night bird's song!—and now the peaches are ripe in the Love Moon of the Dream!

The women and children are drying them on the rocks in the sun, and carry them in baskets and great bowls up to their homes on the mesa.

Tú-wa-ni-ne-ma still sits there in the

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

shadow of the great rock and looks—and looks !

She dries no peaches, and her brother is sent with the herd.

I tell her she will have no peaches for winter time, and that she will be sorry then, but she looks like a grieved child, and asks if I do not want her there.

I can not say “no,” for she is to me like a young mother-bird—and at the same time is like a boy comrade, who tries to be master !

She does not like it at all that I write here—she is so sure that it tires me.

O Wanima, sand of the desert ! you are a woman creature, and wise,—but even you do not see that it is to the letters, and to the poems, and to the dreams, I hold fast, and that through them only, I have life !

It may be that one more letter might

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

come from you — it may be! That hope only came to me here under the peach tree, and it is another link with the world you live in, — O Singer of my Songs!

If it were only one line to tell me you would wear the ring!

How weak a man may grow in a few days and nights! I do not mean to plead with you, Beloved — see, I will draw the pen through that line, and it will be as if it had not been written!

Once I must go up to the heights, and to the shrine of our shells, — once more!

Tú-wa-ni-ne-ma looks sad and has fears when I speak of it. She says the way is too steep — the road is too long for me! But once there I could rest all the day — I could ride to the stone steps of Wálpi, and then, when our star shone, I could ride down again from the Shrine

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

to our Peach Tree Hogan, with you beside me—always beside me!

I dream of wonderful rides we would take together now—if only this weakness would leave me!

To the north, up the valley between the two mesas, one can see a long way until the misty veil of distance hides the end.

One cliff is there, on which the sunlight seems to linger longest—I have loved it always.

Far up that valley—a look and a half away,—there is a wonderful cañon of mystery, where we could wander for weeks in a world of our own.

The Ancient people of the Other Days dwelt there, and the Navajos own the land now, as my people owned the land of these dead cities of the desert.

We would wander alone in the

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

shadows of the echoing walls, and our life would be a dream-life of the silent places. An Indian Adam, and—no—not Eve! Was there not a Lilith who came first in the old mythology? You should be Lilith—an unawakened Lilith!

We would find the secret of the fire together; we would walk with the gods, and hear their voices in the echo of the cañons, and in the whisper of the winds!

We would watch the Morning Star come from the Under-World, and the star of the night break through the blue!

Your bed should be the softest and warmest, and under the cushion for your dear head there would be always the bit of fragrance to speak of me to you through the night! In the desert it would be of the sage brush, in the forests it would be of the pine needles, so soft and fragrant they are!

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

And on one mesa, sacred to thoughts of you, it would be sweetest of all,—the Hernava with its odor delicious, and its tiny rose of gold.

And sometimes there would, perhaps, be storms in our Eden — and then — the thought is sweet! — I could come closer and shelter you!

And always — under the stars' light, or the storm's anger — I would be your sentinel.

O Moon Maid of Mine! In what life shall we ride together to those places where I carry you in my dreams to-day?





At the Sun Shrine of the Mesa.

Lady Mine of the New Moon :

Blue and gray and the chill of the White Dawn, then the ride up the trail past the well where the teva bloom of green hangs from the edge of the bank like a curtain! Down the steps, to the water below, and up on the guardian rocks above, are the many prayer plumes bearing record of the Indian faith.

Peach orchards with the cool shadows are left behind there, and we ride — you and I, Beloved! — slowly along the line of stepping stones of the foot-trail where the women go steadily, day after

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

day, bearing the water jars. Up and up, where the rocks begin, and the desert flowers nestle in the sand.

Then the glow of the Yellow Dawn grows, and the desert is spread below, gold and green in the near morning light, but deep dark blue where the shadows of the far mesas march backwards to the foot of their cliffs.

Above all that sweep of the cold colors of dawn there comes, like a benediction, a touch of gold on the portal of Hua-lo, and on the steps close to the Sun Shrine.

Then the Shrine itself catches the glory of it—and all the eastern face of the mesa is deluged by a flood of radiance.

The gray stone walls of the Apache shield, and records of battles, are transfigured,—no gray remains, only a deep rose flush of indescribable harmony.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

From the portal one sees, far below to the west, the cool dewy shadows of the untouched dawn, held there by the towering cliffs, and on a roof of Te-hua a herald stands and calls to the people.

Gold shafts of the rising sun touch his blanket of crimson until he looks a figure of flame against the sky ! I lie here on my blanket and drink in the beauty of it, and put it on the paper for the days when I may not be able to ride here.

Under the Peach Tree we can read this, and live it over again together !

I look at the steps leading to my sacred solitary mesa. I can not ride up there, so only my thoughts go !

We are saying good-bye to it — O Singer of my Songs !





Sunset at the Shrine.

We have said good-bye also to Wálpi—though Wálpi care nothing for any human thing or its heart-breaks! She looked magnificent against the pale, opaline glory flooding the Sacred Mountains this evening.

And trembling there in its lone radiance—our star!

A little child gave me a cluster of the butterfly flower—a white primrose of the sand. It is very white and tender. It speaks of you—and I carry it with me for the Shrine at the portal, and am waiting there, sheltered from the breeze by a great rock, and watching the sun go down.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

Softest golden glow lingers over the mesa, for the sun is out of sight. The sky is palest yellow now—and palest green—with red-gold lines of clouds low in the horizon, where it meets a dark stretch of mesa.

All between the far western mesa and my own heights is in shadow—dark, flat shadow! Only by looking long can one pick out little fields of corn and melons of the cliff people, or the little reflected light in pools where last night's rain has lingered.

Wálpi and Mishongavi face each other, standing on the cliffs like two great forts,—each with its village back of it on which to draw in time of battle. They make a picture in this light not to be forgotten,—and back of them the Sacred Mountains crowned with gold—the last signal from a dead day!

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

Some "Bahannas" have come down the roadway and stopped by the Shrine. A bahanna is a white outsider. Even you, O Corn-Silk Maid! who are Lolomi, which means all of good, and all of blessing, and all of sweetness the Hopi language, or any other language, can condense in one word,—even you would be bahanna in my land—to all but me!

I can see them from where I lie. It is a girl and a man. Her voice is very sweet—many of the bahannas hurt one's ears with their voices!

They are speaking of a ring she wears, O Lady of the New Moon!—if you had ever looked at me with the look she gives to him!

You are so close beside me—can you not see, can you not feel, what it would have meant to a man?

The man kisses the ring and the

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

hand, and speaks of some house of the terraces where he had bought it for her, and where the natives had come in to smile and stare at her.

"It was as if they had not been there," said the girl, and she held his hand for a moment in both her own against her breast ; "even your silence held a sort of speech. If you had gone away, and never spoken, I should have felt from that day's silence that you did care."

"Of course, I did care," and the man stroked her hair and smiled down at her. "I came near telling you before all that brown audience, but the cloven foot of the missionary has been abroad in this land, and I feared some one of the listeners knew English."

A goat herder of Te-hua came up the west trail with his flock, and the hands of the man and the woman fell

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

apart, and they sat in silence while the dusk fell.

“They will be waiting for us across there,” said the man at last.

The girl stood up and looked slowly across the mesa and plain, and then up at the cliff of the steps, and at Venus shining over the great rock mass above her.

“Good-bye, Wálpi! We two will never again see together your fortress of the mesa,” she said. “I wish I knew the Indian name of that great star there. It seems to belong to this place alone, and to our shrine, and to our nights together!”

The man said, “Come,” and tried to draw her away from the shrine. “This old pagan corner has bewitched you—I could fancy you planting plume prayer sticks at this old pile of rocks—come!”

But she did not go. She stood

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

looking down at the plume sticks. Beside them my shells lay, and the man reached across and lifted two.

“Here is at last a bit of the shrine we can take with us,” he said. “I can not give you the star, or even the Indian name of it, but I can give you this, which may have meant a prayer of some pagan to some heathen god—I will take the other one as a memento,—come!”

She took it and started to follow him down the foot trail, but as the man disappeared around the rocks, and I rose from my nook, the girl came running silently—breathlessly—up the trail—straight—straight to the shrine!

The white shell was in her hand, and she put it to her lips and leaned, heavily breathing, against the rocks.

“For him—for him—for him!” she whispered, and I knew it was a prayer—

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

her voice and her eyes held prayers unspoken!

Then she turned to leave, and almost screamed as she faced me, and both of us were held silent a moment, staring into one another's eyes. Hers were filled with terror. To her I was only a brown Indian, without even the usual touch of white man's garb, and I had terrified her beyond even calling aloud, so I spoke.

"The name of the star is Wugo-shaho," I said, "and you are right—it does belong to the Shrine. It will carry your prayer after the Sun to the Other World."

"Who are —you?" She could say no more.

"I am Sé-téwa, an Indian of the mesa," I said, and to reassure her, I laid the white cluster of the desert primrose in her hand;—for in her face as she stood by the Shrine with the prayer in

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

her eyes, there was a look which belonged to the Sacred Places, and the White Shell things !

Because of the love in her eyes, I felt less lonely. There was some living soul near in this desert world who felt the meaning of the shrine at the portal !

She seemed to bring you—O Hoetska ! gray little singer of the night and the desert moon—even closer to me !

I listened for your name bird's call while our Love Moon—golden and clear—wheeled into the glorified horizon ! Later it grew a globe of silver, light and cool—but just as the first it was palpitating with warmth, and the green lines of the corn fields, and the brown-gray of the sands, alike caught the flame of it—and the high levels of Hu-Katwe and the buried cities, were touched as by their long dead altar fires !

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

And in the light of it we rode silently down the road instead of the trail. And again my horse grew impatient at being halted and held under the stone wall to watch our star out of sight back of the Shrine.

It was so beautiful when framed in the portal there against the purple sky that the perfection of it made the heart ache,—it held a beauty supreme, an untranslatable thought !

And the crown of the perfect day from the dawn until our star went down, has been that you were with me—I was never alone one moment !—all the beauty of sky, and plain, and mesa, was doubled.

Never before has it been so perfect !

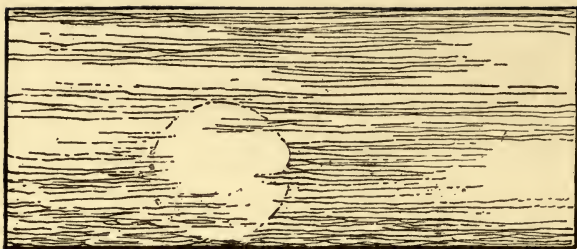
To-night you were in perfect truth the Lady of the Love Moon—still, and silent beside me, but breathing with my breath, and heart-beating with my heart !

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

When I put this paper aside, and wrap my blanket around me, I know that closing of the eyes, or sleep, will only bring nearer the caress of your presence!

At last the dread of losing you has left me. Yet, O Maid of the Dream, I stand sentinel to guard you from—myself!



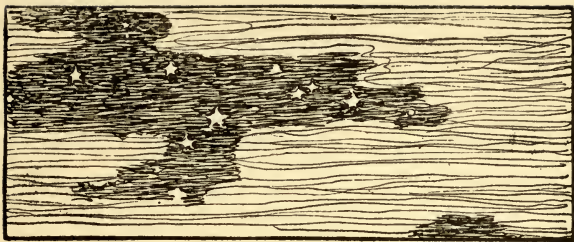


I can not write, O Talapsha!—I can not write what you make me feel these nights when the Love Moon dies!

But the medicine men of the Mountain Chants have solved a problem!

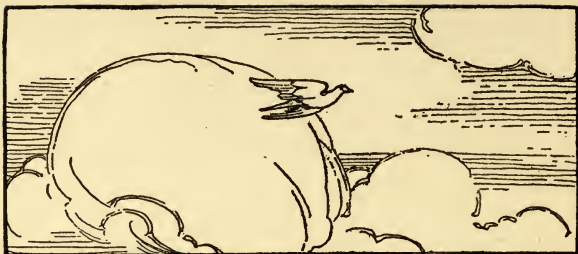
The dreamer of dreams can, through mental and spiritual faithfulness to himself, create the Dream which is the Real of Life!





Only the stars give light, and our
Love Moon is pale at the dawn!





Hoetska:

Last night your bird called to me—
it was not startled this time by the shep-
herd—no one had passed!

The call was to me and the music
has sounded in my heart all the day!

I can not make records of my be-
loved Desert for you these days—only
poems can I write for you —

They will hold the records, and the
thoughts in the records, and only you, O
Beloved! will know the story held within
the heart of them.





In my dreams I see you go up the trail ahead of me leading me to the Sun Shrine! It is strange—many times that dream has come to me!

You belong always on the heights—O Lady of the New Moon! But in the dreams I see you there alone, and—I want to stand beside you there, yet can not follow!





O Dream :

I have lived, for the memory of you,
the life of the Kiva !

You, Lady Beloved, do not know in
your world what that means. In your
colleges, and in the cities, I found no
men who knew that life.

It is lonely as the mesa top in the
darkness, and as far above the world !

Yet the mesa rose, hernava, grows
there, and, in its fragrance in the cool
dusk, dreams come until they touch a
man !

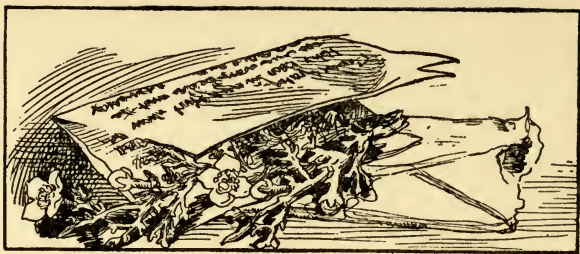
And, in that odorous darkness, you
live for me in its petals of gold !

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

I do not touch them with my lips—
Soul of Mine! I do not pluck one to
wear, as your white friends wear the
freezias in their dinner coats;—only the
winds kiss it, and our star's light touches
it, and when I lie waiting for sleep in
the dusk of the desert night, I look up at
our star, and know that it shines on my
rose, and that the wind of the mesa
brings its breath to me!

And then—sometimes that breath
does not come until many stars have
crossed the sky!—but then, Hoetska—
gray little singer of the desert—then, I
sleep!





Dream Maid of Mine :

I have told Tú-wa-ni-ne-ma of the poems ; I have written your name on the envelope in which they are to go to you.

Some night I will fall asleep here under the Desert Sky ; and the gray-fox skin in which the sun is wrapped for the White Dawn will be slipped off, and the yellow-fox skin of the Yellow Dawn will take its place ;—and even that—the glory of the light in which I was born to my mother will not waken me !

But the poems will go to you—though I sleep !

I have a wish,—a most strange,

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

childish wish,—that the hernaṡā should grow where they cover me from sight in the desert!

But there will be no one to know that it spoke to me of you through the long nights;—and no one to plant it there! The Hopi marks no grave.

Will the things of fragrance, and sweetness, and beauty, beloved of us in the Earth-Life, grow for us in the sunshine gardens of the Other-World?

The armlet I could not finish. I have buried it deep in the sand dune!—no other must look on the thought I tried to shape for you in the silver.

That was another good-bye!





Beloved:

I feel that you once more will come to me at the shrine where our white shells are! I do not know when—but I feel you there!

And, listen—O Maid of the Corn-Silk Hair!

It makes no difference as to the name of the God—since Love is the real God of All the World!

Each language has its own sign for that God, but, even if not named, the Prayer Thought reaches Him, and is answered—Somewhere!

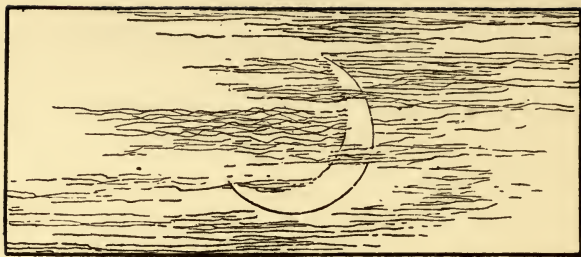
I give you a rule for prayer of one

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

Order of Priests of our Province of Tusayan,—it covers much for those whose shrines and whose gods are far apart !

“You of the antelope Kiva, and you of the snake Kiva, must plant your plumes apart ;—but your prayers, said over the plumes, will meet as in one straight tongue !”





Lady of My Dead Love Moon :

It is night — doubly night !

Wanima tells me there was this evening a slender crescent in the sky — and I did not see it — did not see it !

It is as if you had come to me, and I had turned my head from you — I, who seem to have waited for you through all the lives of the Other Worlds !

I feel guilty that I slept that little, little while ! Come close that you may feel that it is I who am the loser — I !

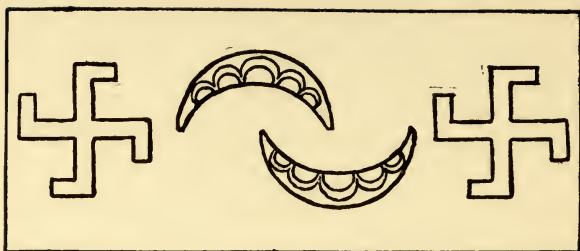
It looks dark on the mesa — only the stars give light — and the way is steep — but I wonder if I were at the portal now,

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

if the silver curve of it would be seen
above the horizon!

Not to say good-bye to your silver
crescent—the very symbol of a bond not
to be named!

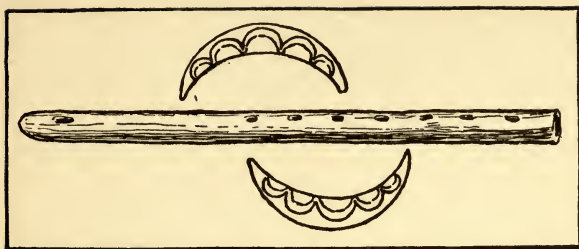




Dream Beloved :

Come closer ! It will not be here at the Hogan of our Peach Tree that I will say good-bye to you —— I can not see where it will be —— That Shadow at the End of the Trail covers so much !





A little while I have slept and wakened at some call ! Was it Lé-lang-ûh of the Flute of the Gods ?

The little winds blow across the dunes and sigh, but it was not a sigh by which I was called ! To hear if it is your bird of the Moon Nights, I listen, but no sound comes !

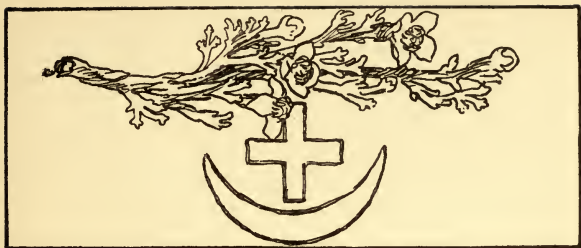
I look up at the Shrine, and a star fell while I looked.

O Star in my Sky ! Do not fall to lower level ! Live there above the Earth-World—and lift me up to you !

The music of the poems may tell you a little of what my dreams are—and all that I ——

Again the call—— Is it the wind,
or is it the Flute?



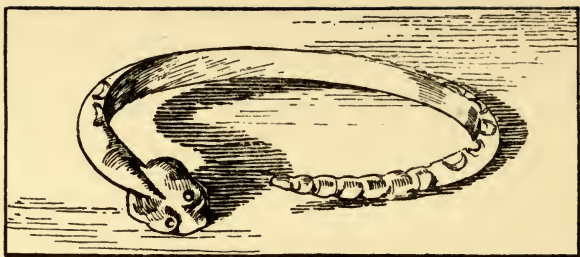


O Singer Who Sang of the Night-Bird of
the Desert :

And who brought a living soul of
music to marriage with an Indian shep-
herd's song!

Will you, when the crescent of the
Love Moon comes again, with that star
in the sky, remember the words of that
desert song, and sing it sometimes in the
dusk—where the white shells are—and
the pines are—and where, perhaps, I
may be?





You !

It is only because you are a girl white in color, with hair like the corn-silk, that he made you in his heart a woman-god of the White Shell Things !

When we go to the Under-World — all—you may be the woman of the brown skin, and he may know me there as the girl of the white shells, and the white clouds, and the white flowers !

That is why I live now and plant prayer plumes at the Shrine, and do not throw myself from the mesa to the rocks where his grave is.

He wrote of the White Shell Thoughts and of the corn-silk hair in the poems.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

And he wrote one name through the poems — Hoetska — the night-bird that sings to the moon in the desert !

I burned them all !

The ashes are blown by the winds across the sands !

I wish every track of every thought of the White People could be blown like that into the Nothing !

I alone know what he thought the hour that was the last, and you alone know how I hate you ! I am glad now for the first time that I learn that English, so I can say it to you on this paper !

Four days he is under the ground by the trail, and four nights he comes back in the dark and stands by me, and makes me send these letters—or I would not be sending them !

I was the one to find him. The stones by the Sun Shrine are red yet from the blood that choked him.

INDIAN LOVE LETTERS

He did not know it, but my arm was around him till all the breath went !

I will not tell you what his last word was — I will not, though he come back from the Under-World to strangle me with his hands !

He, the Indian, dreamed he was something in your white life—a little song you would think of, and sing sometimes !

But I know he was only Sé-kyāl-êst-téwa—the Light of the Sky before the Sun come up !

And I am only Tú-wa-ni-ne-ma—the Sand of the Desert !



1000 net

14 DAY USE

RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

RETURN TO the circulation desk of any
University of California Library
or to the

NORTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
Bldg. 400, Richmond Field Station
University of California
Richmond, CA 94804-4698

ALL BOOKS MAY BE RECALLED AFTER 7 DAYS
2-month loans may be renewed by calling
(510) 642-6753

1-year loans may be recharged by bringing books
to NRLF

Renewals and recharges may be made 4 days
prior to due date

DUE AS STAMPED BELOW

MAR 13 1995

JUN 24 2001

YB 27872

273063

Ryan

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

